

I find, on the 23rd February 1880, a report in the same paper from Edmonton, dated the 26th January 1880, of a meeting, there of which the report says :

"Then the formation of a volunteer rifle company came under consideration. The proposition was made by Col. Jarvis, and was coincided in by the meeting as a necessary measure of protection against expected Blackfeet and Sioux hostilities next summer. Over 30 names were put down at once."

Now, Sir, there are the statements I have been able to collect from outside sources, of the mode in which the proposal made by the Government to enroll a force in these localities was received by the people themselves, and the excellent spirit which they displayed as to the call which was made upon them. Turning, now, to official sources, I will take the report of the officer commanding the militia for the year 1879, and I find that he makes this statement :

"Lieut.-Colonel Osborne Smith, C.M.G., Military District No. 10, Manitoba, points out the necessity of increased forces, in consideration of the influx of foreign labor, in view of the large works of railway construction now in progress. This is a very reasonable suggestion, as experience has shown that this may, at any time, be a very disturbing element. His progress in organising mounted and infantry companies in the North-West Territories has been already fully dwelt upon in the report. He states that the action of the Government in extending the militia law to those Territories and Keewatin has been thoroughly appreciated and availed of by the settlers, as far as their yet comparatively sparse numbers would admit. He looks upon the North-West militia spreading with the newly formed settlements as calculated to form an important agent in civilising that vast Territory, and to become a powerful link in the chain of Dominion defences between the two great oceans."

At another part of his report, the officer commanding says :

"In the course of the past summer, accounts were received tending to show that Indians of the North-West Territories were beginning to suffer hunger from the disappearance of the buffalo. It was supposed that necessity might drive them to plunder or steal for their support. Although the Government had taken precaution to provide a stock of supplies, it was presumed that as the long and severe winter of the prairie district proceeded, marauding parties might cause alarm and trouble among the settlers. It was therefore determined to organise some militia companies round the most populous settlements, to give confidence, and accordingly Lieut.-Colonel Osborne Smith, the Deputy Adjutant-General for Manitoba, was entrusted with that duty, and dispatched to make the necessary arrangements."

"That officer carried out his instructions, and acted with the judgment which distinguishes him, in selecting the most important points for the establishment of armed corps, and the general dispositions with regard thereto. His report will be found in full in Appendix No. 1, and I need only draw attention to it, as I think it will be read with interest by all who look towards the importance of that great region in its not distant future. Lieut.-Colonel Osborne Smith has succeeded in forming the nucleus of one company of infantry at Battleford, the seat of Government, under Mr. Scott, the registrar for the North-West Territories, although the population capable of bearing arms hardly admits of a full company being formed until the winter season, when freighters and hunters will have returned."

"At Duck Lake, between the branches of the Saskatchewan, and a few miles south of Carleton House, a troop of mounted riflemen has been formed, under Mr. Owen Hughes, who is in charge of that important trading post. He feels sure that with the men about his post, the settlers in the neighborhood, and the half-breeds at St. Laurent, he will be able to maintain a thoroughly efficient mounted troop. The Rev. Father André, of the St. Laurent mission station, who exercises an almost unbounded influence over the French-speaking half-breeds in the settlement, corroborates his views. The headquarters of this troop will therefore be at 'Stobart,' Duck Lake."

"On the north branch of the Saskatchewan, near the Forks, the main settlement of Prince Albert lies, and here there are more houses and stores now than some six or seven years ago there were in Winnipeg. The enterprise which is apparent bids fair to make this district one of, if not the most important, in the whole of the North-West Territories. The population are most anxious for military protection, in reference to the gradual influx of armed Sioux Indians in search of subsistence. Prince Albert will therefore furnish two troops of mounted riflemen and one company of infantry—the troops under command of Captain Young, late of Her Majesty's 50th Foot, and Captain Moore, late of the Antrim rifle militia; the infantry company under Mr. Thomas McKay, an influential native of the country and agent of the Hudson Bay Company."

"The action of the Government in extending the militia organisation to the North-West Territories is appreciated, and I would recommend its still further extension to other localities, such as among the settlers of the Little Saskatchewan, and others on the western portion of Manitoba. Arms, ammunition and saddlery have been accordingly issued for the equipment of these corps before the setting in of winter; but owing to the deficiency of clothing in store, from causes I have foretold in previous reports, they cannot be supplied with uniforms at present."

Mr. BLAKE.

There, again, you find allusion to the question of uniforms, to which I have already directed your attention, and which will become more marked as I proceed :

"When orders were issued for the organisation of militia in the North-West, I noticed that the Act did not apply to those Territories; accordingly, an Order in Council was passed, in November, directing proclamation to be made that the entire Militia Act should apply to the North-West Territories and Keewatin. An enormous additional country has thus been added to the militia responsibility, which now extends over the entire Dominion of Canada."

Then the officer commanding proceeds to discuss the question of the Mounted Police and of the existing condition of the country in the light of defence, and he points out :

"If it is desirable to occupy the posts noted besides Fort Ellice, Saskatchewan, Battleford, McLeod, Walsh, Wood Mountain and Souris, each should, if possible, be individually strong enough, at least for self-defence. There are but 350 officers and men of Mounted Police, but there are about 15,000 Indians, of whom 3,000 may be fighting men. They are well armed with repeating rifles, and for the most part mounted."

"Should starvation ensue and the Indians be in despair to provide food for their people, they may become troublesome and aggressive. Therefore, it may become imprudent to have so many small police posts, 150 miles or more apart, without mutual support. A military axiom forbids a force being divided, beyond individual power of self-defence and mutual support. Qu'Appelle should be strong and entrenched; Fort Ellice also. Saskatchewan need only be a small garrison, but also entrenched. Prince Albert will have two mounted and one infantry corps of militia; they should have a *place d'armes* in entrenched lines. Battleford, the seat of Government, will probably be frequented by Indians clamoring for food, and should, besides its company of infantry militia, as yet not very reliable, have a body of police, with works of defence. Duck Lake and St. Laurent will have their mounted militia troop."

So that, in the views of the officer commanding, you will observe how inextricably interlaced are the questions of the organisation of a militia force for the North-West and the question of the Mounted Police. I find it stated, in the former discussions of 1882, and you find that the officer entrusted with the duty of advising the Government as to what is necessary for the defence of the Territories, when he is discussing the Mounted Police, their numbers, their efficiency, their distribution, points out the necessity of the co-operation of those other ingredients of strength, and refers to those points to which I have alluded, and to the local militia as ingredients of strength to be taken in connection with the Mounted Police, which it might be advisable to have at one or other of these points. I do not propose, on this occasion, to go outside the lines of the North-West Territories, although I believe I might very fairly deal with the question of the defences of Manitoba and the North-West Territories as one. Colonel Osborne Smith, in his report, says :

"In August I received from you instructions to be prepared to proceed without delay, when telegraphed to, to certain indicated localities, for the purpose of organising, as a precautionary measure, corps of volunteer militia."

"As I have so lately reported fully to you on the steps taken by me in carrying out this duty, there is not, I presume, any necessity that I should embody a synopsis of it in this report."

We have not been favored with this special report, which would be an extremely interesting document. We have not even a synopsis of it here, but simply a reference to it, and so I was obliged to have recourse to the only sources available :

"It has been satisfactory to find that the action of the Government in extending the militia law to the North-West Territories has been thoroughly appreciated and availed of by the settlers, so far as their comparatively sparse numbers would admit."

"There can, however, be no doubt that in the process of developing these splendid regions of the Dominion that it will be found requisite to establish, as a mean for defence against possible aggression, and for the maintenance of law, a proper military force, which, disciplined and bound together by the strict and well recognised rules which govern such a body, would be looked upon with confidence and respect by the volunteer militia, who would supplement its strength should emergency arise."

"If fostered and encouraged in its infancy, the North-West militia, spreading with the newly forming settlement, will form an important agent in civilising that vast territory, and become an important link in the chain of Dominion defences between the two oceans."